**Psalm 73:25-28**

- **READ Psalm 73**

## I Introduction

- This afternoon it is my intention to use this great Psalm to speak about your health!
- Perhaps, however, it is NOT a topic you care to think about!
- Quite naturally, as we age, health concerns become increasingly the center of our attention, and we sometimes grow weary of them!
- My interest today, however, is not the health of your body, **as important as that is**, but rather the health of your soul!
- When someone is sick or doesn't feel well and visits a doctor, or the doctor may visit them, one of the first things the doctor or nurse will do is use a thermometer or other device to check to see if their body temperature is high, low, or normal.
- Now the thermometer is a very useful tool, isn't it! From it, and the reading it gives, a person can often determine that there is an underlying cause producing the illness. (Such as an infection.)
- Mothers and Fathers of young children learn this very quickly. A baby's temperature is often an indication of an infection.
- In other words, a thermometer is a quick and easy test that a doctor or nurse can use to determine whether there is something wrong with one's physical health.
- I visited the doctor not long ago. Before my appointment, the nurse performed several tasks. She checked my weight, temperature, blood pressure, and pulse rate. These procedures have names.
- **We call them VITAL signs!** They are **important indicators** of one's health!
- **The reason I want to highlight this is that some portions of the Word of God function similarly to devices like a thermometer or blood pressure monitor.**
- **Portions of the Word of God that should be used to check our spiritual vital signs!**
- **From these portions of Scripture we can measure our spiritual health**.
- I believe Psalm 73, particularly verses 25 through 28, is a passage we can use to measure our spiritual vital signs.
- **Indeed, the Bible encourages us to frequently check our vital signs**. In 2 Corinthians 13:5, the Apostle Paul wrote, "**Examine yourselves** to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you unless, of course, you fail the test?"

- In Psalm 73, verses 25-28 describe **two groups of people**. One presents a picture of a **spiritually healthy person, while the other depicts a spiritually sick person**.

- **We must of course ask ourselves which group we are in today.**

- **READ Psalm 73:25-28**

## II Characteristics of each group.

- **The first group I would like to consider is the healthy group. This will be followed by what we can call the unhealthy group.**

- **A) Spiritually Healthy.**

- **#1- The author of this Psalm clearly demonstrates signs of his spiritual well-being. We observe this, first and foremost, in his stated desire.**

- What a person often thinks about, and their inward desires, reveals to us much about them. It shows us what they truly want. Verse 25 of this psalm makes the author's yearnings clear.

- **READ verse 25.**

- What was the author's desire? (**GOD!!**) "On earth, there is nothing I desire besides you." In other words, he indicates that there is nothing he desires more than knowing God.

- Of course, it is okay to desire good health, friendships, and strong family ties, but in comparison to desiring God and seeking after him, all else should be secondary.

- Listen to what the Psalmist writes in Psalm 42, "**As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God.**"

- Surely this is something of what the Lord Jesus Christ taught when he said in **Matthew 6:33** "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

- I think this is illustrated in another section of the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus was teaching his followers about the cost of being a disciple. Listen to His words in **Matthew 8:18-22.**

***"When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake. Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go. Jesus replied, Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head. Another disciple said to him, Lord, first let me go and bury my father, but Jesus told him, Follow me and let the dead bury their own dead"***

- Isn't that an unusual story? There is a man who had to bury his father, which is a necessary and proper thing to do. However, Jesus teaches that the desire to follow him must take priority over everything else.

- Is this your desire today? This I say is a clear sign of spiritual health. One vital sign is that we ask ourselves if there is a deep desire to **know the Lord God**. All else is secondary to our relationship with God.

- Jesus, praying to His Father in heaven, our Father in heaven, said "**And this is eternal life that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent**." John 17:3

- **In all honesty, dear people, do you know Jesus Christ today? I am not asking, "Do you know about Christ?" I am asking, "Do you know Him personally?"**

## #2 - The second indication of good spiritual health that we should observe from this Psalm is the author's comfort in difficult times.

- **READ verse 26**.

- "**When may flesh and heart may fail**" What does the writer mean? I am quite sure we have all experienced this! We have all experienced our flesh and hearts failing.

- When we are disappointed, depressed, or our bodies and minds are weak, we are tired and worn out. Loneliness sets in, and we find ourselves afraid of many things. This is what it is like when our flesh and hearts fail us!

- Who do we turn to in this situation? What is our hope during these dark and challenging times? These questions reveal so much about our spiritual state!

- Do you hear what the writer in Psalm 73 can say: **"but God is the strength of my heart"**

- Yes, I am weak; yes, my flesh and my heart fail me. Yes, things don't look great; yes, the temptations are strong. **BUT GOD, the writer says!**

- **Is this true for you today?** Can you say, but God, this day?

- **I believe this ties into what Jesus said in what may be a familiar passage to you in Luke's gospel.** *He said **"I will show you what he is like who comes to me, hears my words, and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, digging deep and laying the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it. Because it was well built**. Luke 6:47-48*

- When the floods come in your life, the pain, the sorrow, the hurt! Can say, in spite of the difficulties, but **God is my strength**! **But God is my rock of refuge!**

- Dear friend, Is God your strength when your **heart and flesh are failing you**?

- **#3 – Our next vital sign, which I believe speaks to us of our spiritual health, is the hope for the future that we see in the Psalmist!**

- Notice how he also says in verse 26 that God is **"my portion forever**"

- Clearly, his thoughts were not only of this life but also of eternity. He says God is "**my portion forever**."

- To the believer in Jesus Christ, who has trusted in Jesus to take away the guilt and penalty of their sins, **God is their portion forever**, both in this life and in the life to come. You see the believer has **an eternal hope because they have eternal life**!

- **So let me ask you again: Is God your portion forever?**

- We live in a world and a society deeply focused on the here and now, very concerned with material things. Self-centered, with little thought towards eternity and little thought for the condition of the soul.

- However, the writer of Psalm 73 certainly has an eternal perspective. He declares, "**God is my portion forever**!"

- **Our lives are very brief. We are here today and gone tomorrow. The author of Psalm 39 says to God: "You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath"**

- If it is true that our lives here on Earth are brief, and it is, shouldn't we be looking toward eternity? We must be deeply concerned to ensure that God is our portion forever!

- I say the man or woman who has God as his portion forever is a man or woman with strong spiritual vital signs!

- **#4 – There is one final vital sign of the spiritually healthy person** that I can only briefly mention.

- This is simply a desire to speak of God, **to witness to others about God**.

- Notice what the writer says in verse 28 "**I will tell of your deeds**."

- Let us summarize then these four spiritually healthy vital signs:

  **1)** We have a desire for God (Who have I in heaven, desire nothing besides God)
  **2)** We turn to God in times of trouble ((When flesh and heart fail his strength is in the Lord)
  **3)** We have a future hope! (God is his portion forever)
  **4)** A desire to speak to others about God. We love to speak about our great Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

## B) Spiritually Sick.

- **What then can we learn from this Psalm of signs that reveal to us spiritually sick characteristics**?

- First of all, it is a **clear sign of spiritual sickness when we know that we are <u>far from God</u>**.

- **READ verse 27. (<u>first part</u>) "Those who are <u>far from you</u> will perish"**

- Now what does the writer mean, **<u>"far from you'?</u>**

- Certainly, this does not mean that God is far from us. God knows all things; He is always present and not distant from anyone. The issue is that a person filled with unbelief and sin finds themselves distant from God.

- In other words, God is not in their thoughts, and they do not consider Him when making plans. They live as if this life is all there is, and God does not even exist.

- They may say they are a Christian, but their life tells us otherwise. This behavior is characteristic of someone who is far from God!

- This dear friend is **<u>a clear sign of spiritual sickness!</u>**

- Scripture clearly teaches that sin separates us from God. The prophet Isaiah said, ***"Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities <u>have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear</u>.***" Isaiah 59:1-2

- So, we see that sin separates us from God. Being spiritually distant from Him by living in our sin and not turning away from it serves as a warning of spiritual sickness!

- My mother-in-law recently had quadruple bypass surgery. We went to visit here in the hospital. Floor dedicated to heart patients. Every so often you would hear a loud beeping noise coming from one of the rooms. The nurses would rush to the patient. You see their heart monitor went off indicating trouble.

- **A person distant from God resembles a heart patient facing difficulties**. Alarms are sounding. Their vital signs are extremely weak, and they grow weaker with each passing day! I hope this does not describe any of us here today!

- Verse 27 also highlights another aspect of this person who is distant from God: **he is unfaithful**. **"Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are <u>unfaithful</u> to you."**

- Perhaps the **key word here is unfaithful**. An unfaithful person does not believe and continues to break God's laws without remorse.

- Unfaithfulness is a clear alarm of spiritual sickness!

- Notice the end result of the unfaithful one. What does the Word of God say about them? **<u>"They will perish."</u>**

- **'Those who are far from you will perish...."** verse 27

- Earlier in this Psalm, the writer described the **<u>wicked</u>** in verses 18-19: ***"Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors!***

- In other words, dear people, spiritual sickness leads to death! They will perish!

- This signifies eternal separation from the Lord—sent to a place of darkness that God has designated for unbelievers! There can be no worse tragedy than being eternally separated from an all-loving and all-merciful God! That is what it means to perish!

- **So, let us summarize the three indicators we mentioned, which reveal a spiritual life that is sick and desperate for help. They are:**

- **1)** Far from God
- **2)** Unfaithful
- **3)** Result of condition is they will perish.

## III Conclusion

- What then is the conclusion to all of this? What is your spiritual condition today?

- **How can we improve our spiritual health? What remedy does the Word of God provide us? What "prescription" is suggested necessary?**

- The last verse of this Psalm—verse 28—helps us. **First**, prayer. The writer says, **"It is good to be near God."**

- How do we draw near to God? **We do so in prayer!** We must seek after God in prayer. James 4:8 says ***"Come near to God and he will come near to you."***

- Scripture says, "**Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved**." Romans 10. **Calling upon the name of the Lord is prayer**.

- Verse 28 also tells us that God must be our refuge. A refuge is a place of peace and safety. **How do we find peace with God?**

- The Bible answers this very clearly. We can only find peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

- **Read John 3:16-18.** (see two groups in John as well)

- **I hope your body is healthy the next time a** nurse or doctor checks your vital signs.

- May God grant you His blessing in keeping your physical strength!

- But may He also grant you His spiritual blessings—the blessings of being forgiven for your sins and having peace with God. May your spiritual vital signs indicate that you are on the path leading to God's eternal kingdom, where death and sorrow will be no more!

- Amen